



Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council

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John Baughman

Executive Vice President

International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

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Dear John:

I am pleased to forward the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council's (SFBPC) report summarizing stakeholder meetings held during 2003_2004 to explore the feasibility of pursuing a National Fish Habitat Initiative. The completion of the stakeholder meetings moves us closer toward fulfilling the recommendation in the SFBPC's 2002 "*Partnership Agenda*" report regarding development of a national plan to conserve and restore fish habitat. Nearly 200 fisheries professionals and advocates attended the five stakeholder meetings and were unanimous in their support for the Initiative as a concept that should be pursued and implemented as swiftly as possible. The SFBPC greatly appreciates the assistance provided by the IAFWA throughout this process. I'd like to specifically recognize the efforts of Doug Hansen and Eric Schwaab.

This report and its recommendations for next steps in developing a national plan has been endorsed by SFBPC members, has been transmitted to Director Steve Williams and will be shared with members of the IAFWA's Fisheries and Water Resources Policy Committee at it's meeting on September 28 in Atlantic City, NJ. I look forward to the discussions about this initiative.

From the SFBPC's perspective the National Fish Habitat Initiative scoping effort has been both a rewarding experience and an overwhelming success. Upon beginning the process it was our assessment that we would find supporters of the concept, but the nearly unanimous endorsement for the need for such an approach to fisheries conservation was above and beyond our expectations. We are pleased at the progress made to date in developing stronger, more collaborative approaches to fisheries habitat conservation and are determined to remain a strong partner with the IAFWA, the FWS and other stakeholders as this effort proceeds.

Sincerely,

/S/

William Taylor
CHAIRMAN